ADVERTISED COMPETITIONS.

STOCKTON UNION—DRAINAGE OF TOWNS.

You will be delighted to hear, Mr. Editor, that your remarks in this matter have not been without effect: the Stockton guardians have amended their offer, and here it is:—

TO ARCHITECTS.

COMPETITION!!!

The committee are desirous of receiving designs: to the author of the one they shall consider first in merit, a premium of

TEN POUNDS!

will be given, with the option of acting as clerk of the works! To the second in point of merit they will present

A SUIT OF NEW CLOTHES!!

and the third and fourth will be allowed to contend by climbing a well-greased pole * for the prize of

A LARGE LEG OF MUTTON!!!

This you will admit is far more likely to attract the eye than the one they have chosen.

But, Sir, leaving them and their fellows to the contempt they deserve, is it not high time that architects should endeavour to check such proceedings as these? Already have your pages been chosen as the medium for putting forth suggestions for an organization of the profession; and I am sorry that the matter has not yet taken shape, as I think some measure of the kind must be adopted to secure fairness in this, the surest, if not the only way of raising the architectural reputation of this country,—the only way for success to the young architect without influence. Should success be accorded to any movement that may be made, it is to you, Sir, that our warmest thanks will be due for your advocacy of justice, and condemnation of unfairness in these proceedings, and for the uniform interest you have taken in the subject. Q.

SIR,—In your useful publication of the 8th instant, I was very pleased to observe a letter, headed "Competitions advertised last week," descanting upon the paltry remuneration offered to the *successful* candidate as architect.

Pray continue to draw public attention to the manner, so little likely to produce beneficial or efficient results, in which in several cases the important subject of the "drainage and sanitary improvement of provincial towns" is conducted by the local authorities.

Two examples will be sufficient to illustrate my meaning. In your paper of the 11th August last, an advertisement appeared, headed "Chippenham, Wilts," setting forth that the Commissioners of the Chippenham Improvement Act required a plan and report upon the best mode of draining the town, and the efficient discharge of such drainage into the river Avon; such plan and report to specify the courses and levels at which such drains should be made, and how far the existing drainage may be available; and they will pay a competition premium of 20*l.* for the plan and report they deem the best. It further states the commissioners are to be at liberty to act upon the plan and report approved of, at their discretion, without further payment; but they are not liable to any expense, or subject to any charge whatever, in connection with any plan or report not adopted or approved by them.

To this tempting offer I endeavoured to respond, by trying to form an association of professional men who should contribute two guineas each, towards the preliminary expenses of procuring the map and taking the levels, but even that small sum was more than (with the exception of about three) any respectable engineer or surveyor would hazard in the undertaking, and consequently I abandoned the proposition.

The second specimen, to which I would draw your attention, appeared in your paper of the 27th October, under the heading "Warwick Public Health Act." It states that a premium of 50*l.* will be awarded by the local board of health, for the best plans and specifications for the entire draining and supply of water for the town of Warwick, with an estimate of the probable cost of the same: persons competing are to furnish an entire plan of the several streets of the town, including the parishes of St. Mary and St. Nicholas; showing the direction of all intended pipes and drains, with the sizes, sections, and all other necessary details, and are to prepare sections of the several levels, and proposals for flushing the sewers, carrying off all waste water, and trapping drains; also the best method of forming the sewers and collecting the sewage manure. The whole to show a scheme of perfect drainage and an abundant supply of water. The approved plans to become the property of the corporation, on the premium being awarded and paid.

Surely, Sir, the attention of these local authorities and the public needs only to be properly directed to the subject, to convince them that no professional man of any respectability or standing would, or ought to be expected to, undertake so great an amount of work, requiring many years of previous practical and laborious experience, and present devotion of time and pecuniary outlay, upon the *chance* that his plan will be considered *the best* by the local authorities, and in that case, and in that only, to be scantily remunerated by the paltry premium offered.

But, on the other hand, it must be patent to every sensible man, that this class of advertisements will be responded to by a description of persons of whom a number are to be found at the fag end of every profession, whose only hope of success is, the certainty that, in the absence of more skilful competitors, some plan must be pronounced the best, however inefficient it may be for the purpose, and consequently entitled to the premium.

Since writing the above, another instance, more ludicrous than either of the two mentioned, has just been pointed out to me, in your paper of the 24th November, headed, "*St. Thomas the Apostle, Devon*," offering a premium of twenty guineas for the best, and five guineas for the second best design for draining that district,—the map exhibiting which is to be drawn on a scale prescribed by the General Board of Health in London. This scale, being about 40 feet to the inch, very frequently, in the case of towns of any size, requires mounted paper of the value of 4*l.* or 5*l.* to plot the map on, to say nothing of the drawing table and office, which are indispensably necessary to the accurate construction of the map. E. RYDE.

Can we be surprised at such offers as these from parties who know little or nothing of the skill and attainments required by an architect or engineer, and who daily see in the newspapers advertisements from persons who pretend to teach the whole science and practice of engineering, architecture, surveying, and a host of qualifications, in the space of six weeks, and for the sum of 10*l.*? Can we wonder, then, that while such emanations as these are constantly before our eyes, attainments should be thought so little of? Although by many these are appreciated at their true value, yet in the eyes of some, and as appears not a few, they will have the effect of bringing down the profession to a ruinously low standard?

ALPHA.

In the remarks made by your various correspondents relative to the conduct of those *soi-disant* architects who compete for 10*l.* premiums, and advertise their services on the *most reasonable terms*, one class has been overlooked, i. e. those who injure their professional brethren (if we may admit the term), by designing for builder architects, who, not satisfied with the profits arising from their own calling, avail themselves of the services of the class alluded to for further aggrandizement. You may not perhaps be aware of the extent to which this system is carried in country towns; and it is to me surprising that the parties employing these builder architects cannot see the net into which they must inevitably fall. Verily, what with engineering architects, and builder architects, the legitimate professional man has but a sorry chance in these days. It is, indeed, highly desirable that some effort should be made to raise the profession to that position which it is fully entitled to occupy in society, and, at the same time, to put an end to that degrading system of competition which is now practised.

As a constant reader of your excellent periodical, I have had much pleasure in perusing the letters of those gentlemen who have addressed themselves to the subjects above named; but there has been in all cases one fatal omission. Nothing, in these times, can be done without money. Let those who are anxious for the welldoing of the profession not only unite, but put their hands in their pockets, and subscribe towards obtaining the desired objects. There is always a difficulty in commencing an agitation of this kind. My plan would be simply this:—Let a subscription be entered into, a room in some central situation obtained, a *provisional* committee organised; let circulars be addressed to all members of the profession, calling their attention to the existing evils, and public meetings be advertised simultaneously in London, Birmingham, Liverpool, and York, or any other towns that may be thought preferable; let a series of resolutions be prepared and also circulated, with a request to each architect to express his approval, dissent, or amendment. By these means the general feeling would be obtained, and such alterations might then be made in the resolutions as would tend to meet the views of nearly all parties, and thereby ensure their unanimous adoption.

A COUNTRY ARCHITECT.

* By emblem of a competition!

BRITISH ARCHÆOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

AT a public meeting on December 14th, Mr. Pettigrew, V.P., in the chair, a paper from Mr. Joseph Clarke was read, giving an account of the discovery of Roman remains, on the property of Mr. Stephens, at Upham, between Winchester and Bishop's Waltham, consisting chiefly of the lower parts and foundations of walls, occupying a considerable space, the length in one direction being 120 feet. There is reason to believe that these are the remains of habitations, as coloured plaster was found adhering to the walls in many places. In a passage which was cleared to a considerable distance, were found fragments of coarse pottery, and other evidences of Roman occupation, but in no part of the space any trace of Samian ware. In the enclosures slabs of stone, of a hexagonal shape, were discovered, and from their shape, and the discovery of nails still remaining in some of them, they are supposed to have been used for roofing.

Mr. Planché read a very elaborate paper on the tilting helmet, tracing its history from the pointed and rude defence used by the Normans, through the many cylindrical and allied forms of the succeeding period, to the more elegant kind in use, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and well known in the heraldic devices of that and succeeding times. Allusion was made to several kinds of these helmets exhibited at former meetings of the association. Mr. Planché's remarks were illustrated by a long series of well-executed diagrams, drawn by Mr. C. Baily; also by plates of monumental effigies, and other standard works.

Mr. G. Wright produced some rubbings of a crowned M, and curious collar, having upon it alternately a rose, and what appears to be a letter r,—existing in an old vault, beneath Belvoir Castle, the seat of the Duke of Rutland. Mr. Planché considered the M to be placed there as the initial letter of Manners, and the r that of Roos, both of which names belonged to the families of the Earls of Rutland.

BEDFORDSHIRE—CHURCH PROGRESS.

Woburn.—The alterations here, though not all that could be wished, are improvements. The pulpit and reading pew have been removed from the very singular position they occupied, and placed in their right situations. The pews, alas! though lowered, are pens still. It is said the fastidious taste of the congregation would not hear of open sittings, though we have reason to believe that this improvement, as well as what has been effected, would have been at the expense of the noble Duke in whom the presentation is vested.

Cranfield.—The restoration here is on a bold and liberal scale; those who knew the church in its miserable state a few years ago, will hardly believe what has been done. We believe, also, that almost all has been at the expense of the reverend incumbent and his friends. No calf pens here; and painted glass

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